GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:4029
ANSWERED ON:09.12.2016
FSSAI
Raghavan Shri M. K.

Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government is aware that harmful chemicals are used to speed up ripening of fruits and vegetables;

(b) if so, what action has been initiated by FSSAI to contain such malicious practices as well as stopping adding of harmful colours which are unsafe for consumption to food materials;

(c) whether FSSAI has conducted inspection of various food packaging units during the last three years across the country; and

(d) if so, the details of such inspection, State-wise and product-wise including the unsafe products identified?

Answer

ANSWER
THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND
FAMILY WELFARE
(SMT. ANUPRIYA PATEL)
(a): As per information available with the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI), some reports have appeared in the media regarding use of calcium carbide for ripening fruits.

(b): As per regulation 2.3.5 of the Food Safety and Standards (Prohibition and Restriction on Sales) Regulations, 2011, use of calcium carbide for ripening of fruits is prohibited. FSSAI has sent letters to all State/UT Governments/State Food Safety Commissioners emphasising the need to keep a strict vigil for checking use of calcium carbide for ripening of fruits and apprising them of the methodology for detection of Acetylene in godowns and storage chambers. They have also been apprised of the approved concentration of ethylene for ripening of fruits. State /UT Govt authorities/State Food Safety Commissioners have also been impressed upon to conduct periodic inspections and monitoring, inter alia, of fruits and vegetables markets. A document has also been uploaded on the FSSAI's Official website i.e. fssai.gov.in to make the public aware about ill effects of consuming fruits ripened artificially by calcium carbide. FSSAI and the Ministry of Consumer Affairs regularly issue advertisements in print media to acquaint consumers about the harmful effects of use of carbide gas for ripening of fruits.

(c) & (d): FSSAI IS responsible for making regulations and setting standards, import of food, notifying labs and coordination to ensure cooperation between FSSAI and States. The implementation of the Food Safety and Standards Act, 2006 falls within the remit of the State/UT Governments and it is discharged through the Commissioner of Food Safety, Designated Officers and Food Safety Officers. The drawing of samples, getting them tested and launching prosecution, etc. is the mandate of the State/UT Governments. Regular surveillance, monitoring and inspection is undertaken by State/UT Governments to check compliance with the provisions of the Food Safety and Standards Act, 2006, and regulations therunder. However, separate information in respect of inspection of food packaging industries carried out by State/UT authorities is not maintained centrally by FSSAI.